

News Release
U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
District of Rhode Island



February 23, 2005

**Johnston man is charged with \$18,500 in
bogus hundred dollar bills**

A federal grand jury in Providence has charged **Christian A. Sarria**, of Johnston, with attempting to pass \$2,000 in counterfeit \$100 bills and with possessing an additional \$16,500 in bogus \$100 bills.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente, Thomas Powers, Resident Agent in Charge of the Providence Office of the United States Secret Service, and Colonel Dean Esserman, Chief of the Providence Police Department, jointly announced a three-count indictment, which the grand jury returned on February 16 in U.S. District Court, Providence.

The indictment alleges that, on February 10, Sarria attempted to pass \$2,000 in bogus hundred dollar bills at a Citizens Bank branch in Providence. It also alleges that he possessed 17 counterfeit \$100 bills and another group of 148 bogus \$100 notes.

Sarria, 29, of 1 Doyle Avenue, Johnston, was arrested on a federal complaint on the day of the alleged offenses. According to an affidavit supporting that complaint, the manager of the Citizens branch at 270 Academy Avenue contacted Providence Police and the Secret Service when Sarria allegedly tried to change 20 suspect \$100 bills into twenties.

Providence Police subsequently found another \$1,700 in counterfeit notes in Sarria's car, according to the affidavit. Additional investigation led Secret Service agents to 148 counterfeit notes that were hidden in the backyard of Sarria's home.

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According to the affidavit, agents concluded that the counterfeit bills were likely produced by “experienced, high-quality counterfeiters in or from Colombia.” Agents also learned that Sarria had recently returned to the U.S. from Colombia.

The indictment charges Sarria with one count of attempting to pass counterfeit notes and two counts of possessing counterfeit notes. An indictment is merely an allegation and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. Upon conviction, the maximum penalty for each offense is 20 years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine.

Sarria was arraigned on the indictment on February 18. He pleaded not guilty and was released on \$25,000 surety bond.

The **United States Secret Service** and **Providence Police** investigated the case, with assistance from the **Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement**. Assistant U.S. Attorney Adi Goldstein is prosecuting the case.

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